

Amendments to the Claims

Claim 1 (currently amended): A porous media, the bulk matrix of which comprises a material having a low coefficient of thermal expansion; said porous media stress relieved to make the porous media stable for cutting or lapping, said porous media capable of retaining 99.99% or more of particles of a size of about 0.003 microns and larger at 0.2 slpm/cm²; and said porous media has a permeability factor of $3.5 \times 10^{-12} \text{ m}^2$ between $1.0 \times 10^{-11} \text{ m}^2$ to $1.0 \times 10^{-13} \text{ m}^2$.

Claim 2 (currently amended): The porous media of claim 1, wherein the material is a metal membrane.

Claim 3 (currently amended): The porous media of claim 1, ~~wherein the membrane that has a~~ permeability factor between of 1.0×10^{-13} and 1.0×10^{-11} of about $3.5 \times 10^{-12} \text{ m}^2$.

Claim 4 (original): The porous media of claim 2, wherein the metal includes a 64 wt. % iron and 36 wt. % nickel alloy.

Claim 5 (currently amended): The porous media metal-membrane of claim 4, ~~wherein the membrane that~~ has a porosity between about 40 and about 65%.

Claim 6 (currently amended): The porous media in claim 1 ~~whereas the membrane is~~ made from starting powders where 90% fall between 2 and 36 microns.

Claim 7 (currently amended): The porous media in claim 1 ~~whereas the membrane is~~ made from starting powders where 90% fall between 2 and 26 microns.

Claim 8 (currently amended): The porous media in claim 1 ~~whereas the membrane is~~ made from starting powders where 99% are less than 50 microns.

Claim 9 (original): A porous metal frame for supporting a pellicle and a reticle positioned in parallel relationship to each other which comprises:

at least one wall, the ends thereof joined to form an air gap subtended by said at least one joined wall,

two opposing sections on a single wall or walls including the porous media of claim 1.

Claim 10 (original): The frame of claim 9, wherein its shape is rectangular.

Claim 11 (original): The frame of claim 9, wherein its shape is square.

Claim 12 (original): The frame of claim 9, wherein its shape is oval.

Claim 13 (original): The frame of claim 9, wherein its shape is circular.

Claim 14 (original): An optical apparatus which comprises the frame of claim 9 bonded to a transparent pellicle and a reticle optical mask bonded to said frame in parallel relationship to each other.

Claim 15 (original): The frame of claim 9 having at least two walls wherein said walls are joined directly to each other.

Claim 16 (original): The frame of claim 9 having at least two walls wherein said walls are joined together by elbow joints.

Claim 17 (currently amended): The frame of claim 9 having a porous media with a density between about 2.85 and about 4.85 g/cc and having two opposing gas porous walls capable of retaining 99.999999% or more particles of about 0.003 microns or larger at 8.3 sccm/cm².

Claim 18 (currently amended): The frame of claim 9 ~~having a~~ wherein said porous media ~~with~~ has a density between about 2.85 and about 4.85 g/cc said ~~and having~~ two opposing ~~gas porous walls capable of~~ sections have a permeability factor between 1.0E⁻¹³ and 1.0E⁻¹¹ m².

Claim 19 (currently amended): The frame of claim 9 ~~whereas~~ wherein the ~~membrane~~ porous media is made from starting powders where 99% are less than 50 microns.

Claim 20 (original): The frame of claim 9, wherein the frame includes solid and porous media portions.

Claim 21 (original): The frame of claim 9 having two opposing walls being nonporous to gas.

Claim 22 (original): The frame of claim 21, wherein the solid portion defines apertures for receiving porous media.

Claim 23 (currently amended): The frame of claim 22 having two opposing walls having slots which extend through the wall thickness, said slots being filled with ~~[[a]]~~ the porous media.

Claim 24 (currently amended): The frame of claim 9 having a porous media with a porosity between about ~~[[40]]~~ 40% and about 65%.